



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Minute of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) meeting held on Thursday 23 March 2023 at 9.00am

Present:

- Alison Johnstone MSP (chair)
- Claire Baker MSP
- Jackson Carlaw MSP
- Maggie Chapman MSP
- Christine Grahame MSP

In attendance:

- David McGill
- Michelle Hegarty
- Martin Whitfield MSP, Convener SPPA Committee
- Katy Orr
- Lorna Foreman
- Judith Morrison
- Sara Glass
- Mairi Pearson
- Susan Duffy
- Gillian Baxendine
- Jane McEwan
- Alan Durward
- David Hershaw
- Lynsey Hamill
- Tracey White
- Stephen Wright
- Huw Williams
- Mark Brough
- Eric MacLeod
- Lisa Creamer
- Judith Proudfoot, Secretary

Support to Members

1. Martin Whitfield, Convener of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee attended the meeting to discuss the provision of support to Members who may be the subject of investigation by the Ethical Standards Commissioner.
2. The SPCB outlined the services already available to Members and it was agreed that the Presiding Officer would discuss the matter further with Mr Whitfield to determine how best to make Members aware of the support available.

Previous minutes

3. The SPCB agreed the minute of the meeting held on 9 March 2023.

Matters arising

4. The SPCB noted that the staff pay award had now been agreed by the 3 trade unions representing SPCB staff and thanked the negotiating team for their efforts in achieving a positive outcome.
5. The SPCB also noted the latest updates relating to the use of the Tik Tok application. On the basis of advice from the National Cyber Security Centre, all Members, Members' staff, Parliament staff and contractors' staff were being strongly advised to remove the TikTok app from any device currently used to access the Scottish Parliament's IT systems. Further communications would be issued should this advice change.
6. Jackson Carlaw raised inflation-based anomalies relating to the maximum viring of money between provisions of the Expenses Scheme and in the allocation of Office Cost Provision to regional Members following the recent uprating of the Scheme. Officials agreed to look into the issues to determine whether changes to the Scheme were required.

Chief Executive's Report

7. The SPCB noted the Chief Executive's Report.

Expenses Publication Scheme – Paper 19

8. The principles of the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme commit the SPCB to publishing Members' travel and expenses claimed through the Scheme on a quarterly basis to ensure ongoing transparency.
9. The SPCB received an update on the replacement of the current system for publishing this information. The new system was required as the

current contract was due to expire at the end of April. There would be no change or addition to the expenses data that was already being published, the new system would simply make data more easily accessible and make use of the technology now available.

10. The SPCB agreed the testing arrangements for the new system, including involvement of external users such as journalists, and the planned approach to communication with Members and their staff.

Public Engagement Strategy update – Paper 20

11. The SPCB agreed its current Public Engagement Strategy in 2021. This paper provided an update on the work being done by officials to achieve the aims of the strategy. The SPCB discussed these activities and provided additional feedback on further options for increasing and improving public engagement. Officials were asked to investigate how constituents might be reimbursed for travel and expenses in certain circumstances.
12. The SPCB also discussed the proposals and recommendations coming from the work of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee and how those relevant to the SPCB might be progressed as part of the overall work to support the Strategy.
13. The SPCB then asked about the planned family event usually organised to mark the new Session but which had not taken place on this occasion due to covid. The SPCB was keen that an event should still be organised, albeit on a smaller scale, and that it should be held this year rather than next.

Creche service – Paper 21

14. The SPCB discussed and agreed operational arrangements for the new creche service which was due to be opened late April/early May. Communications and promotion of the re-opening of the service would be issued once the Care Inspectorate registration has been awarded and a re-opening date confirmed.

Protests in the chamber

15. The SPCB discussed the ongoing protest disruptions to business in the chamber. A priority for the SPCB was ensuring the safety and security of all those working in and visiting the Parliament while balancing this with maintaining openness and accessibility for all. The SPCB agreed that the ongoing disruption of business was not acceptable and agreed some initial measures including engagement with protestor groups and implementation of the requirement for all mobile devices to be stowed away when in the gallery during business.

16. The situation would be monitored and further measures considered if necessary.

Date of next meeting

17. The next meeting of the SPCB was scheduled for 20 April 2023.

SPCB secretariat
March 2023